

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A method for applying software upgrades to a networked computer, comprising the steps of:
 - running an executable program on a target network computer to determine the configuration of at least one installed software package on the target computer;
 - comparing the determined configuration to a list of current configurations for installed software; and
 - determining whether the current configuration of the at least one installed software package is the current configuration for the installed software package, and
 - when said determination determines that the configuration of the at least one installed software package is not the most current configuration, causing the target server to obtain and run any necessary software upgrades necessary to bring the configuration of the at least one installed software package to current configuration.

2. A process for upgrading software resident on a networked computer, said process comprising the steps of:
 - executing a computer program on a networked computer to determine operating versions of at least an installed software component;
 - comparing the determined operating versions to a current software version list;
 - identifying software components with operating versions discrepant from the current software version list; and
 - upgrading discrepant software on the networked computer.
3. The process of Claim 2, further comprising generating a list of discrepant software.
4. The process of Claim 2, further comprising determining the required update for discrepant software.
5. The process of Claim 2, wherein the networked computer resides on an internal network.
6. The process of Claim 2, wherein the networked computer resides on an open network.

7. The process of Claim 6, wherein the open network is the internet.
8. The process of Claim 2, wherein the networked computer is a server.
9. The process of Claim 2, wherein the networked computer is a workstation.
10. The process of Claim 2, further comprising controlling the update operations from an administrative server, wherein the administration server is communicatively coupled to the network suitable for transferring files to the networked computer.
11. The process of Claim 10, wherein the file transfer occurs through one of at least remote control of hardware or software.
12. The process of Claim 2, wherein the software upgrades are stored on one of at least a library server and administrative server.
13. The process of Claim 2, wherein said executing a computer program includes executing commands suitable to cause the networked computer to access a remote storage site, and download and install a software program

capable of determining the identity and configuration of software installed on the networked computer.

14. The process of Claim 2, further comprising compiling the determined operating versions into a list.
15. The process of Claim 14, further comprising reporting the list to an administrative computer.
16. The process of Claim 15, further comprising formatting the list in a format suitable to be read by software operating on an administrative computer.
17. The process of Claim 15, wherein said reporting includes a tagged field format.
18. The process of Claim 17, wherein the tagged field format is HTML.
19. The process of Claim 17, wherein the tagged field format is XML.
20. The process of Claim 2, wherein the current software version list is based on software installed on the networked computer.

21. The process of Claim 20, wherein the current software version list is substantially developed by parsing the operating versions of the software installed on the networked computer and the current software version list.
22. The process of Claim 2, wherein the current software version list is based on an externally generated list.
23. The process of Claim 22, wherein the externally generated list is generated by a system administrator.
24. The process of Claim 22, wherein the version list includes at least one older version of a software package, said older version suitable for maintaining compatibility with a proprietary software package
25. The process of Claim 2, wherein said identifying includes generating an update list of software to be upgraded to reach the current software version list.
26. The process of Claim 25, wherein the update list identifies the current software version list and the determined operating versions.

27. The process of Claim 25, wherein the update list is limited to discrepant software.
28. The process of Claim 25, wherein the update list includes at least one intermediate version suitable for reaching the current software version.
29. The process of Claim 28, wherein the update list is sequenced to identify that the intermediate version be installed before the current software version.
30. The process of Claim 25, wherein the update list is communicatively coupled to a program for generating an update script.
31. The process of Claim 30, wherein the update script is installed on the networked computer suitable to cause the networked computer to download and install updates to installed software component consistent with the current software version list.

32. The process of Claim 30, wherein the update script is substantially generated by aggregating script modules associated with at least one required update.
33. The process of Claim 25, wherein the networked computer generates an installation report identifying the status of at least one installation.
34. The process of Claim 33, wherein the installation report is forwarded to an administrator.
35. The process of Claim 33, wherein the installation report is stored for later use in determining whether additional updates are required for the networked computer.
36. The process of Claim 2, wherein at least one of said executing, said comparing, said identifying and said upgrading occurs automatically.
37. The process of Claim 2, wherein said executing includes starting the computer program on the networked computer.

38. The process of Claim 37, wherein said starting includes providing the command line to run the program at the command prompt.
39. The process of Claim 38, wherein the argument entered at the command line may be split into a string array.
40. The process of Claim 39, wherein the argument is suitable for being compared to switches.
41. The process of Claim 38, wherein the command line resides on the networked computer.
42. The process of Claim 2, wherein said executing includes initializing the global variables on the networked computer.
43. The process of Claim 2, wherein said executing includes setting at least one switch indicative of the inclusion of beta updates.
44. The process of Claim 2, wherein said executing includes verifying the presence of components.

45. The process of Claim 44, wherein the components include .XML format data
46. The process of Claim 44, wherein the components include MSXML.
47. The process of Claim 2, wherein the current software version list is downloaded to the networked computer.
48. The process of Claim 47, wherein the downloaded version is compared to determine if the version is the most recent version.
49. The process of Claim 2, wherein said upgrading includes loading the installation software for all updates that apply to the installed software packages into a required updates collection data structure.
50. The process of Claim 2, wherein said upgrading includes removing superceded updates.
51. The process of Claim 2, wherein said upgrading substantially occurs automatically.

- 52. The process of Claim 2, wherein said upgrading occurs through a user interface.
- 53. The process of Claim 2, wherein said updating includes rebooting the networked computer.
- 54. The process of Claim 2, further comprising verifying said upgraded discrepant software.
- 55. The process of Claim 2, wherein the determination of operating versions is performed substantially using the registry.
- 56. The process of Claim 2, wherein the determination of operating versions is performed substantially using the win 32 operating system
- 57. The process of Claim 2, wherein the determination of operating versions is performed substantially using the win 32 product
- 58. The process of Claim 2, wherein the determination of operating versions is performed substantially using service.

59. The process of Claim 2, wherein said upgrading includes determining if an upgrade is necessary.
60. The process of Claim 59, wherein a necessary upgrade is included in the update list.
61. The process of Claim 2, wherein said upgrading includes determining if an upgrade is superceded.
62. The process of Claim 61, wherein a superceded upgrade is excluded from the update list.
63. A method for maintaining a desired software configuration on a network accessible computer at at least a compliance level, said method comprising:
- testing the software on the network accessible computer to identify the build level of the network accessible computer;
 - comparing the identified build level to the compliance level;
 - generating a list of non-complying software resulting from said comparison;
 - determining updates needed to bring software into compliance; and

installing said determined updates to thereby bring the software into compliance.

64. A computer system incorporating resident software for upgrading at least one computer resident in the system, said computer system comprising:
- software on the resident computer to identify the build level of the resident computer, said software comprising:
 - code for comparing the identified build level to the compliance level;
 - code for generating a list of non-complying software resulting from said comparison;
 - code for determining updates needed to bring software into compliance; and
 - code for installing said determined updates to thereby bring the software into compliance.